

CONSIDERATIONS

Moving to a

Toleration,

AND

Liberty of Conscience.

WITH

ARGUMENTS

Inducing to a Cessation of the Penal
Statutes against all

DISSENTERS

Whatever, upon the Account of

RELIGION,

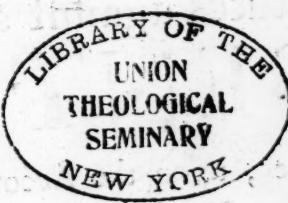
Occasioned by an Excellent Discourse upon that
Subject, Publish'd by His GRACE

The Duke of Buckingham.

Humbly offered to the Parliament at their next
Sitting at Westminster.

Tantæne animis Cœlestibus Iræ?

LONDON, Printed for R. Hayburst, 1685.



The Epistle Dedicatory.

To His GRACE the

D U K E

O F

Buckingham.

My Lord,

*T*is with the Highest Veneration due to Your Graces Illustrious Worth and Quality, that I presume to make this Address to a Person of Your Graces Eminence and Greatness. And indeed, the only Encouragement for that Confidence, is, That this Discourse is onely Listed under Your Graces Banner. Your Grace has been pleased to be the first Assertor of that Justice, which in this Age of the World, wanted onely so Great a

a *

Name

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Name to Espouse and Vindicate it. For alas, whatever (tho never so rational) has or could be urged in the Defence of Christian Clemency and Tenderness, by any less Hand, would have been overbourn by the present Impetuous Torrent against it; And therefore they only wanted so uninterested a Champion as Your Grace to Patronize them. If any less Person had attempted it, presently the opprobrious Name of a Non-con, or, a Tub-Preacher, would have been thrown in his Teeth, and all Reasons whatever, upon a Toleration, tho never so Convincing, would have been instantly Blasted (how unjustly soever) with the Old Brand of Great is Diana of Ephesus, as if Publish'd, Maintain'd, and cryed up only for the Service or Interest of a Party or Faction. But Your Grace has the happiness of a Station and Character above the Reach of so feeble and stingless a Calumny, whilst Your Generous Pen has been pleased to adapt that Truth which Malice may Snarl at, but cannot Bite.

I confess

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I confess indeed, the General, nay only Arguments urged against a Toleration, is that Clamorous pretence, of its Danger to the Government, through an Indulging of Rebellious and Antimonarchical Principles, which under the Mask and Cover of Tenderness of Conscience, have been, or may be diffused thro' the Kingdom, and several Republick Machinations and Poysonous Designs, have or may be batcht and nourisht under the unhappy Consequences of Liberty of Conscience.

And truly, Persecution for Dissent, in matter of Faith, without this plausible Apology, mould not have so much as a Shadow of Excuse to Protect it from the Infamy of a more than Pagan piece of Cruelty. But alas, this weak Pretext, when truly and duly weigh'd, will quickly fall to the Ground. For that there have been, and may be again, those Atheistical and Diabolical persons, who Villanously, under the Veil of Religion, play the blackest of Hypocrites, and carry an their own ambitious and damnable

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nable Intregues, under that Golden Visor, is a most undoubted and too sad Truth. But is that a sufficient Plea, why those, whose utmost Aime is the Innocent Worship of God, untainted with any such Disloyal Thoughts, shoud not only be Loaded with their Reproach, and Stigmatized with their Brand, but also be equally involved in their Condemnation, viz. Fined, Harast, Imprison'd, Beggard, and Ruin'd as such. If the Government has bad Experience of those Antimonarchical Principles so fomented, undoubtedly that Experience has given it Discretion enough to prevent the future Effects of them, and to distinguish betwixt the Guilty and the Innocent. Let every Judas therefore have his Judas Fate; which may the Wisdom of the Nation and Government take care to see Executed: And those that urge the denial of a Toleration from their Jealousie only of the forementioned Danger, must certainly suspect a very great Imbecility in the Administration, that can find no better Expedient,

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dient, then rooting up the Flower, to keep the Spider from sucking Poyson out of it.

This whole Discourse therefore, being absolutely free from the least intention of favouring any of those false Pretenders to Religion and Christianity, those wicked Enemies of Magistracy, the Sacred Ordinance of God, is only an Endeavour to evince the Reasonableness of a Christian forbearance to our weak Brother, purely and only as such. With this Integrity and Innocence, these Considerations are made Publick, and with no other Recommendation durst the unknown Author lay himself at Your Graces Feet.

C O N S I -

Conci-

CONSIDERATIONS

Moving to a
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AND

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CONSIDERATION I.

IT is not the Will of the Great and Wise God, to appoint any Forcible Ways or Courses to bring Men and Women to Conform to his Worship: But Christ was pleased to Commissionate his Apostles (to whom he committed the Keyes of his Church) to Preach and Declare the Christian Doctrine: And they that succeed them in their Office, are not by Might or by Power, but by gentle Invitation, and the influence of his kind Spirit, to inform the Judgment, convince the Conscience, and so to perswade the Children of Men to be Recouciled unto God. And who is Man that he should take another Course, and will not rest in God's Wil-dome? Now we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you through us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

CONSIDERATION II.

THe using outward Compulsion in matters of Conscience, does only serve to make Men Hypocrites, but works no saving Conversion. If Men conform to any Worship or way thereof, with an unwilling Mind, they cannot serve God aright, though the Worship be Right, because the Heart of the Worshipper is not Right. God calls for the Heart, *My Son, give me thy Heart.* If it were not for Compulsion, the Man would be in some other Practice or Profession; and when he Conforms only to save his Person or his Purse, he is the Servant of Man, and not the Servant of God, and this is not to Saye his Soul. *Not by Constraint, but willingly; not for siltby lucre, but a ready mind.*

CONSIDERATION III.

ALL sorts of Persons are for Liberty of Conscience for themselves, even those that are most Imposing upon others. They would account it hard measure to be constrain'd to perform, or forbear such and such things which concern their Religion, or to suffer unproportionable Penalties. And why should not the Church Protestants make the *Presbyterians*, the *Independents*, the *Papists* case their own in this Point, seeing they are all Fellow-Christians: *Therefore, whatsoever things ye would that Men should do unto you, do ye so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

CONSIDERATION IV.

The good Rules of Humanity, and common Civility, which is carefully observed in smaller matters, are openly violated, by using of force in the matters of Conscience. Men abhor to thrust that Meat and Drink down their Neighbours Throat, which will not agree with their Stomachs. They say commonly, *Pray take that which best likes you:* and why are they not as civil in the matter of Religion? *Have compassion on one another, Love as Brethren, be Pitiful, be Courteous.*

CONSIDERATION V.

The Church Protestants in *England* have been distressed by hot doings heretofore in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, when they were accounted Criminals for not conforming to that Worship which was then the Established worship of the Kingdom: And they should have taken heed before now of what they did, and of what Spirit they be still of, in Prosecuting others, seeing they know not how soon that part of the Wheel which hath been, or is on the Ground, may come to be at Top, and fall the heavier on them upon this Account, *For with the same measure Men meet withal, it shall be meted to them again.*

CONSIDERATION VI.

The Conforming and Nonconforming Protestants, and the Protestants and Papists, all do agree as to the substance of Christianity, in the same Articles of Faith, and the same Rule of Manners, in the Apostles Creed, and the Ten Commandements. There is one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptisme. As a variety of Flowers may grow on the same Bank, so may Protestants and Papists live in *England*, *Union in Affection*, is not inconsistent with disagreement of Opinion. There is much more Reason to love one another for the many things wherein we agree, than to fall out for those wherein we differ; and though we cannot have Communion in the same External worship, we can and have Communion in the same Internal Adoration of the same Blessed Trinity, and in the one hope of our Calling unto Life Eternal, through Jesus Christ. We cannot come together in the same Church, but may live together in the same Land; and as we are under the same Gracious King, he may Protect both, and suffer no Party to persecute one another. *The Woolf shall lie down with the Lamb, the Leopard with the Kid, they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my Holy Mountain.*

CONSIDERATION VII.

The French Protestants, who are the Dissenters from the Established Worship of that Kingdome, are kindly received and succoured by *England*. And when the French King is highly blamed by English Protestants, and perhaps too by some English Catholicks, for persecuting his peaceable Subjects, shall we do the same things in our Kingdome which we condemn in another? *Therefore art thou inexcusable Man, whosoever thou art, for thou that judgest another, dost the same things.*

CONSIDERATION VIII.

The Prosecuting Dissenters and Recusants for matters of Conscience is of great disadvantage to the Trade of the Kingdom, the Dissenters being a chief part of the Trading People of the Nation, considered as Merchants, Shop-keepers, Clothiers, Farmers, &c. by which many Thousands of the Kings poor Subjects are maintained, and consequently Liberty of Conscience must be a most effectual means for the restoring of it.

I will mention a Story or two which may be easily attested, if they be called into Question. One *Thomas Pearn* about 16 Years since of *West Dean* near *Barnstable*, who kept many Poor People at work in the Cloathing Trade, was Prosecuted upon the Act for Twenty Pound a Month, so many Months for not coming to Church, that he was forced to quit his Habitation and Employment. Upon this the Poor People of many Parishes go a Begging, and the numbers presently were so great, that the Justices were fain to meet, and consulting together, conclude upon it to get the Mans Fines to be discharged. This being done, *Pearn* returns to his busines, takes the Poor off their hands, and finds them again the same Living.

In like manner, about 14 Years since, the Bishop of *Sarum* sends forth Instructions into all the Parishes of his Diocess for bringing them to Church, or citing them to his Coutt. There were Eighty Clothiers Nonconformists of several Judgments in the County of *Wiltshire*, who being Alarum'd by this Summons, think of withdrawing their Trade, (the time for Provision of their Wool favouring such a suspension) but considering what a Number of Poor depended on them, some Employing 500, some a 1000 People under them, who were capable of getting no other maintenance: Besides that, the Farmer was no less concerned than the Spinner and the Carder, who could have no Money for his Wool; fearing also that if they should give over on a sudden, there might so much Clamour ensue as might turn into some uproar, they agree upon sending up eight or ten of their sufficient Men to represent their Case to the King and Council. Orders are taken hereupon that the Arch-Bishop Writes

to the Bishop to desist, and assurance is given by both the Secretaries to the Clothiers for their safety in keeping on their Employment.

What those Justices and what the Council at that time saw convenient for that Shire, and those Towns, will be discerned (I doubt not) by the considerate, to be of the like Emolument throughout the Nation.

And this brings to my remembrance a certain Prophesie, that is now much in Mens Mouths, and hath been going for Scores of Years, *That after Eighty Five, England shall Thrive*: which though I have hitherto regarded (I must confess,) when I have heard the words but as Rhime only, yet if it shall please the King at his coming now to the Throne, to give Liberty of Conscience to his People, according to the design of this Paper, I shall not doubt but to see the matter really accomplished. The Riches of a Nation are the Bodies of Men; for the greatness of a Kingdom certainly consists not in a vast continent of Ground, but in the Multitude of its Inhabitants; and the Thriving of the People, lies in the encrease of Trade, Manufacture and Commerce, as is intimated. An Act for Universal Toleration (Stated rightly, that is, of all, so far as they are Tolerable, whereof the Wisdome of a Parliament is the fittest Judge) would produce both these; It would bring People that are Persecuted in our Neighbour Nations about their Religion, to *England*, as it does, or hath done to *Holland*; and they must bring their Hands and Busines with them. Besides, the infinite Encouragement it would give to many, who now keep in their Monys, by Reason of their Obnoxiousnes to the Law, which they would bring forth most Industriously into Employment, as soon as they could see themselves safe, and their Consciences out of danger. *And when Isachar saw that Rest was good, and the Land that it was Pleasant, he bowed his Shoulder to Bear, and became a Servant unto Tribute.*

CONSIDERATION IX.

IT hath pleased our most Gracious Sovereign, King JAMES the Second (whom God Bless with a gentle Mind, and good dayes) to declare to his Council, and then to the Nation, that he will fol-

low his Deceased Brother in his Example of Clemency, which we may hope for in this point of Indulgence. We have his Royal Word, for thus much; and his Word, we all hear, may be Presumed upon, so far as the meaning may be Presumed. I do not therefore here Presume upon his meaning, but the Clemency of the late King, and Tenderness to his Subjects in his Gracious Purposes to indulge them in the point of Liberty of Conscience, does appear sufficiently to all Men on Record. In his Declaration from Breda, April 1660. "We do declare (says he) a Liberty to Tender Consciences, and that no Man shall be disquieted, or called in Question for differences in Opinion, in the matters of Religion, which doth not disturb the Peace of the Kingdome; and that We shall be ready to consent to such an Act of Parliament as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us, for the full grant-
ing of that Indulgence.

In his Declaration Dated October 1660. "We do again renew what we have formerly said in our Declaration from Breda, for the Liberty of Tender Consciences. That no Man shall be disquieted or called in Question for differences in Opinion in matters of Religion, which do not disturb the Peace of the Kingdom, and if any have been disturbed in that kind since our Arival here, it hath not proceeded from any direction of ours. At the opening of the Parliament on the Eighth of May, 1661. "I do value my self much upon keeping my Word, and upon making good whatsoever I Promise to my Subjects.

Again in his Speech to both Houses on July the 8th 1661. "It is to put my self in Mind, as well as you, that I (I think so often as I come to you) mention to you my Declaration from Breda; and let me put you in mind of another Declaration Published by your selves about the same time, which I am perswaded made mine the more effectual, an Honest, Generous, and Christian Declaration, Signed by the most Eminent Persons that had been the most Eminent Sufferers, in which you Renounced all former Animosities, and Memory of former unkindnesses. And my Lords and Gentlemen, let it be in no Mans Power to charge Me or You with the breach of our Words or Promises, which can never be a good Ingredient for our future Security. Again

Again in his Declaration of *March 1662*, "Concerning the Non
" performance of our Promises, we well remember the just words
" from *Breda*, viz. we Remember well the Confirmations we have
" made of them, since upon several occasions in Parliament, and as all
" these things are still fresh in our Memory, so are we still firm in the
" Resolution of performing them to the full. And further, " We do
" still conceive ourselves so far engaged both in Honour and what
" we owe to the Peace of our Dominions, which we Profess we can
" never think secure whilst there shall be a colour left to the Malitious
" and Disaffected to inflame the Minds of so many Multitudes, upon
" the score of Conscience, with despair of ever obtaining any
" effect of our Promises for their Ease. After all, we have his Indul-
" ging Declaration indeed, for fulfilling all his Promises, and put-
" ting an end to a preceding violent Prosecution of the Act against
Conventicles, *March 1672*.

It being Evident, by the sad experience of Twelve Years,
" that there is little Fruit of all those forcible courses; we think our
" selves obliged to make use of that Supreme Power which is not
" only Inherent in us, but hath been declared and Recognized to be
" so by several Statutes and Acts of Parliament, and therefore do
" now accordingly Issue out this our Declaration for the quieting
" the Minds of our good Subjects in these points, for inviting of
" Strangers in this Conjunction to come and Live under us, and for
" the better Incouragement of all, to a chearful following their
" Trade and Callings, from whence we hope (by the blessing of
" God) to have many good and happy advantages to our Govern-
" ment. There are many Gracious Sayings here might be added
upon this, which the late King uttered in return to the Ministers who
brought him the Thanks of several Counties for this his Declaration,
it to be Recorded, as of extraordinary kindness; but seeing it hath
pleased the Divine Providence to take him from us, who should
have made them good, I am content they be Interred with him.

The Words of our present Sovereign are I am sure of more con-
cernment now to us, which as they make all this which is brought
to be material, and for which the whole Nation is Addressing him
with their Thanks (among whom I know no cause why I may not

bring also my obligation) must not be omitted. "Si hec ita placet
 "sed Almighty God to place me in this station, and I am now to
 "succeed so Good and Gracious a King, as well as so very kind a
 "Brother, I think it fit to declare to you, That I will endeavour to
 "follow his Example, and most especially in that of his Clemency,
 "and Tenderness to his People. Then after Five Days Audains
 the High Priest descended with the Elders; and an Orator Named Ter-
 willus, who when he was called forth, spake thus, Seeing that by thee
 we enjoy great Quietness, and that by thee very Worthy Deeds have been
 done to this Nation, we accept it always and in all places, most Noble
 Felix, with all thankfulness.

These are some Reasons (among Multitudes) that fly abroad for
 Toleration, and they are no pick'd chosen ones, but the most
 plain and obvious to the meanest Capacity, such as I have catch'd up
 most easily, from the Papers only of two ordinary Sedulous Men; the
 one of them having had Publick Employment about the Wool and
 Manufacture of the Nation, and so is Versed in these things; the o-
 ther having got, or kept such as these Publick Speeches by him, and
 Collected these Passages to my Hand; only I have changed their
 Style, and abbreviated them, to avoid the baldness and Prolixity: I
 will now add some Testimonies for the same thing, out of an Author
 of another Character, but I will name neither one nor other, that
 I may not offend them or any body. And these Testimonies which
 are Argumentum ab Autoritate, shall be my Tenth and Last Con-
 sideration.

C O N S I D E R A T I O N X.

It is not like in the Three first Centuries of the Church, that any
 thing is to be found in the Christian writings, for the use of the
 Sword in Religion, whilst themselves were under it. In the next
 ensuing, we have Constantine, Constanlus, Jovian, Valentinian, Va-
 lem, Theodosius, and after those, Honorius and Arcadius may be cited
 for their larger Permissions, especially towards the Jews, by those
 that will be at the pains to do it.

In the Year 386, Idasius and Libacius were condemned by the
 Gallican

Gallican Bishops for being Authors of bringing the Priscillianists to Execution. And St. Augustine no doubt with the Fathers, generally are against any Sanguinary Laws in this matter. *Nihil bonis in Catholicâ Ecclesiâ hoc placeat, si usque ad Mortem in quicquam Hereticum serviantur.* *Contra Ceremonium lib. 3. cap. 9. 6.* Hence were they called *Iacobini*, and held for Heretics, who maintained, That those who erred in Religion, ought to be put to Death. And it is observed, it was *Dominicus* who the first that brought up the Fire among Christians upon that account. *Withdraw from them, avoid them (says the Scripture)* *qui non voluntur doctriam vestram, sed ut interficiant et persecutari eum, non ut credere*, but not beat or Persecute them as the Heathens do, says *Ignatius*. For it is an unheard of, strange kind of Preaching the Gospel (says *Gregory*) to exact Belief (as the Egyptian their Bricks) with Stripes. *Decree arbitramur (says Theodosius and Valentinian) nostrum imperium subditos nostros de Religione commonefacere;* They chose not to say [imperare] but [commonefacere] signifying thereby, that Religion ought not to be forced. *Nihil enim (says Leontius) tam voluntarium quam Religio, in qua se animas est Sacrificantis aversus, jam sublata, jam nulla est.* *Religo imperari (says Cassidore) non posset.* And, *suadenda est (says St. Bernard) non imperanda.* *Præcepit Sancta Synodus (says the Toleian Council, de Iudei) nemini deinceps ad credendum vim inferre.* And the New Law (says *Tertullian*) does not vindicate it self Ultore gladio. The Jews took no such course (as Pestilent as their Doctrine was) with the Sadduces, nor Christ with the Samaritans, See *Luke 9. 35. Marth. 13. 28, 29. John 18. 36. John 6. 67.* And will ye also go away, says Christ to the Twelve? Which are words removing all force and necessity from Man in the choice of his Religion. So *Chrysostome, Athanasius, Cyprian, I may also add Augustine and Salvian.*

We may read in the Life of *Josephus*, when some of the *Traehonites* came in for Rescue to the Jews, where himself was Governour, and the Jews would thereupon constrain them to be Circumcized, or else not let them abide with them, he would not permit that injurious Zeal, alledging, That every Man ought according to his own Mind, and not by Mans compulsion to serve God. In our English Story (to fait this) by *Bede*, when *Ethelbert* the first Prince that received Christianity of the *Saxon Heptarchy*, was converted by *Austin*, he is further by

by Gregory, and many thereupon came into the Church; it is said, He esp[ecially] embrac[ed] those that came in, but compelled none; for he had learned that the Faith and Service of Christ ought to be voluntary, and not of constraint. " It helpeth much (says the Imperial Edict of Con-

" fession and L[utheran] Law) to establish the publick Tranquillity, for every

" Man sh[ould] have Liberty to use and choose what kind of Worshipping

" himself pleases; and for that intent is this done of us, to have no man enforced to one Religion more than to another. A Prince

who would draw his Subjects (divided into Sects and

Factions) to his Religion, should not (in my Opinion)

use Force, says Bodin, which he Enhances more particularly,

from the example of Theodore toward the Armenians.

John Barclay (in his William the Wrore Adversus Monachomachos) hath a Discourse on purpose to this effect about the Calvinists, (as it is thought) under the Name of the Hypothianians, in one chapter of his Argent. And Camerarius in his Historical Meditations, hath a chapter as Learned, Full, and Grave, as need to be on this Subject, lib. 3. cap. 18. " It was observed by the Popes Council (says Guicciardini) that the Prosecution of Luther, since it was not accom-

" panied with their own Reformation, did encrease his Reputation;

" and that it had been a Je[st] Evil to disseminate the knowledge of such

" a matter, which would perhaps have dissolv'd of it self, than by

" blowing at the Brand, to make the Fire burn the more. There

may be some Notes conferred with this out of Davila, upon the de-

liberations of the Politick Catherine, Regent of France, about the

Pacification in her Son Henry the Thirds time; I will rest in one after

Henry the Fourth succeeded. That great Prince thought fit to de-

clare himself Catholic, but giv[ing] that same Edict for Liberty to the

Hugonots, to be renewed and passed the Parliament of Paris, " By

which means endeavouring to remove Suspicion from their minds,

and confirming them by good Usage, together with some Gifts and

Promises to the chief Heads, he insensibly took away (says the

Historian) the pulse and strength of that Party, so that those that

are versed in the Kingdom, believe that a few years of such sweet

Reconciliation (if he had not been disabled in this course through want

of Money) would have extinguished that Faction, which so many

" years

" years of desperate Wars had not, with the Effusion of so much
" Blood, been able to weaken. *Violent courses (say my Lands) are like hot Waters, that may do good in an Extremity; but the most of them doth spoil the Stomach, and it will require them stronger and stronger, and by little and little they will lass the Operations.*

THEY that love this Common-wealth (says Judge Jenkins) will use
means together with the Restoration of the King, to procure an Act of
Oblivion, and tender Conscience a just and reasonable satisfaction; else
we must all Perish first or last.

I will Crown these Testimonies with the Experience and advice of
CHARLES the First to our late Sovereign: " Beware of Ex-
asperating any Faction by the crostnes and asperity of some mens
Passions, Humours, or private Opinions employed by you,
grounded onely on the differences in lesser matters, which are
but the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion, wherein a charitable
Connivance, and Christian Toleration, often dissipates their
Strength, whom a rougher opposition fortifies, and puts their de-
spised and oppressed Party into such Combinations, as may most
enable them to get a full Revenge on those they count their
Persecutors, who are commonly assisted by that vulgar Com-
seration, which attends all that are said to suffer under the notion
of Religion.

There are two Rules in the Preamble of the Statute *Primo Mariae*;
the one is, That the State of a King standeth more assured
by the love of his Subjects, than in the dread and fear of
Laws. The other is, That Laws justly made, without
extream Punishment, are more often, and for the most
part better obeyed, than those that are made with that ex-
tremity. Unto which my once before named Lord chief Justice
Cook, Subjoyns this Sentence, *Mitius imperante melius Pareatur.*

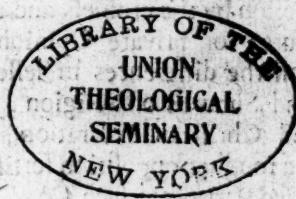
I will close up all with the end of a Speech of Sir Orlando Bridge-
man to the Parliament, when he was Lord Keeper.

" If any just grievances shall have happened, his Majesty will be
as willing and ready to redress them, as you to have them Present-
ed to him; and his Majesty doubts not, but you will give Hearing
and Moderate Counsels, and Imprint that known Truth in the
Hearts

"Hearts of his Subjects, that there is no distinct Interest between
the King and his People, but the good of one, is the good of both.

Now this is the Copy of the Letter which Artaxerxes gave unto
Benaiah Priest, I make a Decree, that all they of the People of Israel,
and of his Priests and Levites in my Realm, which are minded of their
own free will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee.

And Gamaliel stood up in the Council, and said, Ye Men of Israel,
take heed to your selves, refrain from these Men, and let them alone, for
if this Counsel or this Work be of Men, it will come to nought; but if it
be of God, ye cannot Overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to Fight
against God.



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